UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

SPLOS

MEETING OF
STATES PARTIES

Distr.
GENERAL

SPLOS/INF/5
1 March 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

MEETING OF STATES PARTIES
Fourth Meeting
New York, 4-8 March 1996

LETTER DATED 28 FEBRUARY 1996 FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR LEGAL AFFAIRS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

Implications of the United Nations budget for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

I wish to bring to your attention an important matter that pertains to the preparation of the initial budget for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

You will recall that the Third Meeting of States Parties (27 November-1 December 1995) considered the question of funding the expenses for the preparatory work to be carried out by the Secretary-General before the judges are elected on 1 August 1996, which amounted to approximately $191,000 (SPLOS/WP.1, para. 34). The Secretariat was requested to seek a revision of its budget to incorporate those additional costs.

The General Assembly, when considering for adoption the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, placed a ceiling on the budget with the requirement of a further reduction of approximately $154 million. Given this situation, it is not feasible to request additional or supplementary allocations to meet the sum of $191,000. In addition, any possibility that may have existed to meet this sum from within the reduced budget of the Office of Legal Affairs no longer exists. I have been asked to downsize our proposed budget by means of, inter alia, a 6.4 per cent vacancy rate, and it now appears that we will have an even higher vacancy rate in order to achieve our required reductions. It is simply not possible for us to finance the $191,000 now.

In the light of the above, we have included this item in the new budget proposal for the Tribunal. I sincerely hope that this matter can be the subject of consultations with States Parties prior to the Meeting so as to expedite a

decision and avoid prolonged deliberations, which would not be cost-effective. The Secretariat has also addressed this issue in the revision of the draft initial budget (SPLOS/WP.1/Rev.1, para. 46).

(Signed) Hans CORELL
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs
The Legal Counsel